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FM AMCONSUL LAHORE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2601  
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 2530  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 1200  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 0997  
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY 0009  
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 0011  
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 0012  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0028  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0038  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0075  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0030  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0324  
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT 0011  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0030  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 0032  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 0049  
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PK](#)  
SUBJECT: MNA ALLEGES ABUSE AFTER RELEASE FROM JAIL

REF: LAHORE 140

CLASSIFIED BY: Brian Heath, Principal Officer, U.S. Consulate  
Lahore, U.S. Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (U) On May 22 a Lahore anti-terrorism court released PML-N MNA Saad Rafique on bail after more than three months in jail. Accused by the government of inciting the violent February 14 anti-cartoon protests in Lahore, Rafique was originally taken into custody outside the National Assembly on February 17 and charged under the anti-terrorism law (reftel). He was granted bail on the charges stemming from the cartoon protests on May 5, only to be immediately detained on new anti-terrorism charges brought by the government. The new charges alleged Rafique inspired violence with a fiery speech he made on the occasion of Shabaz Sharif's attempted to return to Pakistan in May 2004.

¶2. (C) During a recent meeting with consulate officials Rafique claimed he was tortured while in custody. When pressed to elaborate, Rafique backpedaled somewhat and added the torture was not "to the third degree." According to Rafique, jail officials would routinely make him stand blindfolded and handcuffed for up to six hours while verbally abusing him. He made no allegations of beatings or any other physical abuse. Rafique expects continued harassment by the government. He and his brother were recently contacted by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) officials and asked to provide details about their finances, leading Rafique to believe a NAB investigation is soon to come. Additionally, Rafique expressed concern that his bail could be revoked at any time or that yet more charges could be brought against him.

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: Rafique is a rising figure in the provincial PML-N hierarchy, a fact widely attributed to his charisma as a public speaker and willingness to use provocative rhetoric to attack political opponents. However Rafique may have reached too far when, about a month prior to the cartoon protests, he directly accused Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi and his family of corruption during a live call-in television news program that featured both men. Rafique's arrest and imprisonment are viewed by many to be retribution for those comments. END COMMENT.

HEATH